THE SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN: 2011-2013

Working Draft December 3, 2010

Our Vision for Seattle

A city where imagination and opportunity thrive.

Our Mission

The Seattle Public Library brings people, information and ideas together to enrich lives and build community.

Guiding Principles

Support intellectual freedom
The Seattle Public Library provides all individuals in our community the right to access constitutionally-protected information.

Promote literacy and a love of reading
Recognizing the vital importance of reading to open doors and expand horizons, the Library strives to support every user in becoming a lifelong reader.

Protect confidentiality of patron records
Our patrons' requests for information, the online sites they access, and their borrowing history are kept confidential.

Respect and embrace the entire community
We celebrate Seattle's diversity and strive to ensure that all people feel welcome in the Library. We strive to meet the needs and expectations of every library user.

Foster a healthy democracy
The Library is committed to building an informed community, and providing neutral ground where participation in civic life is open to all.

Form strong partnerships
The Library's resources, involvement, and leadership in the community are extended through partnerships with individuals, public and non-profit agencies, community groups, educational institutions, and businesses.

Adapt and innovate
To stay relevant to patrons' needs and interests, we must continuously adapt what we do and how we do it. We are a learning organization and invest in our staff, technology, and infrastructure to improve service.

Summary of Goals and Objectives

This Plan is organized around the following five Goals, which are described in more detail on the following pages. Narrative introductions are being developed for each Goal that will outline the inspiration and ambitions for outcomes associated with each major topic.

I. **Expand Seattle's Access to Information, Ideas and Stories**

    A. Lead the nation in providing access to digital material

    B. Develop relevant and inspiring collections that meet Seattle's evolving needs and expectations

    C. Drive new models for improving information access and delivery

II. **Fuel Seattle's Passion for Reading, Personal Growth and Learning**

    A. Build community around books

    B. Strengthen the Library's contribution to the education of Seattle's youth

    C. Be Seattle's source for high quality free instruction and programs to support personal growth

    D. Integrate learning into daily life

III. **Empower Seattle's Distinctive Communities and Vibrant Neighborhoods**

    A. Bring Library resources to where people are

    B. Establish the Library as a civic focal point and resource hub for Seattle's communities

    C. Adapt spaces and services to support Seattle's vibrant neighborhoods

IV. **Build partnerships to make a difference in people's lives**

    A. Deploy a systematic approach to partnering that best leverages Library and partner resources

    B. Create alliances with government agencies and community groups to benefit Seattle residents

V. **Foster an Organizational Culture of Innovation**

    A. Build Library staff and institutional capacity to innovate

    B. Use rigorous analysis to provide a positive user experience

    C. Manage change with flexibility

I. Expand Seattle's Access to Information, Ideas and Stories

A. Lead the nation in providing access to digital material

- Build a comprehensive digital collection that is among the best in the country

- Negotiate with e-publishers to make popular digital material easily available to patrons

- Take a leadership role in determining the best way for libraries to preserve collections in older formats

B. Develop relevant and inspiring collections that meet Seattle's evolving needs and expectations

- Find new and better ways to hear what the public wants in the collection

- Create and collect original, non-published local interest material such as podcasts of community events and oral histories

C. Drive new models for improving information access and delivery

- Implement state-of-the-art improvements for a user-friendly website and catalog

- Re-invent the ways the Library connects information seekers with librarians and resources

- Provide full access to Library materials for people with disabilities

- Pilot new ways to showcase, organize and deliver collections drawing on customer feedback and best practices

- Deliver innovative services such as print-on-demand stations or automated book dispensing machines in targeted locations

II. *Fuel Seattle's Passion for Reading, Personal Growth and Learning*

A. Build community around books

- Re-imagine the Library's role in introducing readers to new books and helping readers choose the next book

- Provide more ways for people to join conversations about books and culture

B. Strengthen the Library's contribution to the education of Seattle's youth

- Lead the movement to provide crucial early learning experiences for Seattle's young children

- Make every teacher and school administrator aware of the Library's ability to provide students with homework assistance, access to technology and diverse collections

- Develop resources that support school curriculums through collaborative relationships with educators

C. Be Seattle's source for high quality free instruction and programs to support personal growth

- Ensure the people of Seattle have the skills to find, evaluate and use information

- Create learning opportunities with public, private and non-profit partners that maximize the best of Library and community resources

- Develop inter-generational programming that inspires people to share stories across ages and cultures

- Expand adult instruction and programming to engage Seattle's large young adult and growing senior populations

D. Integrate learning into daily life

- Establish the Library as the first source for practical information on commonly shared life challenges such as parenting, personal finances, education, health and aging

- Create a platform where librarians, individuals and organizations can exchange knowledge on topics of interest to the community

- Transform the Library into a learning lab where anyone can experiment with new technologies

III. Empower Seattle's Distinctive Communities and Vibrant Neighborhoods

A. Bring Library resources to where people are

- Establish a system-wide, coordinated outreach program to ensure Library staff know and participate in the life of the communities and neighborhoods we serve

- Use online communities to reach new audiences

B. Establish the Library as a civic focal point and resource hub for Seattle's communities

- Convene civic conversations where neighbors have a voice in discussing issues that matter

- Become the best one-stop source for accurate information about government services

- Develop dynamic programming, services and spaces shaped by teens for teens

- Connect our most vulnerable community members with information and services that improve their quality of life

- Welcome immigrants and refugees with relevant collections, services and connections

C. Adapt spaces and services to support Seattle's vibrant neighborhoods

- Charge Library staff to become the go-to contacts for well-rounded, current information on neighborhood activities

- Develop resources, services and staff to reflect the personality and needs of the neighborhoods we serve

- Employ creative space planning to make library buildings flexible and responsive to user priorities as less space is needed to house physical collections

- Re-shape our policies and practices to maximize user access to computers, meeting rooms and study areas

- Experiment with new ways to harness volunteer energy and capacity

IV. Build partnerships to make a difference in people's lives

A. Deploy a systematic approach to partnering that best leverages Library and partner resources

- Develop a partnership plan to build thoughtful ties and provide exciting new services to Library users

- Identify and replicate successful partnerships so more patrons benefit from these collaborations

- Actively seek opportunities to support the work of city agencies, service providers and cultural groups and customize information for their use

B. Create alliances with government agencies and community groups to benefit Seattle residents

- Collaborate with partners to provide high demand public services such as weatherization vouchers, tax help, or healthcare policy information at libraries

- Become the first choice location for neighborhood meetings

- Be a catalyst for civic improvement by convening brainstorming sessions with groups that share the Library's interest in enhancing social welfare and cultural engagement

V. Foster an Organizational Culture of Innovation

A. Build Library staff and institutional capacity to innovate

- Integrate Library collections, services and programs through collaboration and teamwork across work groups

- Actively experiment to better serve patrons, implementing successful pilot projects more widely over time

- Train all staff to be effective promoters of Library resources and services

- Create a tech-savvy environment where all staff keep pace with advances in the world of information services

B. Use rigorous analysis to provide a positive user experience

- Upgrade tools for collecting, analyzing and sharing patron statistics, customer feedback, demographic and market research to inform decision-making

- Establish effective channels for staff and the public to communicate experiences and insights about ways to improve service

- Develop staff expertise to identify and track major Seattle lifestyle trends so the Library can best align resource with evolving community needs and interests

C. Manage change with flexibility

- Adapt or pioneer service models that revolutionize the way the Library serves its patrons

- Assess service strategies and staffing models regularly to ensure the Library is using public dollars wisely to meet the needs of the community